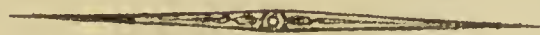


A N
A P P E A L
T O T H E
PEOPLE of ENGLAND;
W I T H
R E M A R K S
O N
Dr. PRIESTLEY'S LETTERS to the Right
Honourable EDMUND BURKE.



M.DCC.XCI.

P R E F A C E.

The Author has, in the following publication, endeavoured to convince his countrymen, that they enjoy a full share of happiness under their present Government.

—— *Quod petis hic est,
Est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus.*

He therefore combats, and he trusts confutes, those principles of Dr. *Priestley*, which are intended to sow the seeds of dissention in the minds of men; detects and exposes his sophistical arguments in opposition to the Test Laws, and in favour of an Elective Clergy.

DEPRENDI MISERUM EST.

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AN APPEAL, &c.

Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Preface.

DR. PRIESTLEY, in the preface to his Letters addressed to Mr. BURKE, expresses great surprize that Mr. BURKE, or any one, could aid and assist the Americans in their Revolution, and be hostile to the proceedings in France; and asserts, that they agree in their general principles.

How two circumstances can agree in the general, which differ in every particular, I know not. It is equally hard to define why

Mr. BURKE's supporting the whole body of the Dissenters in what he thought their just claim, should pledge him to assist the exertions of a factious part of that body, in subverting all order, and in destroying every vestige of our present Government in Church and State. However, neither Mr. BURKE's conduct nor his publication stand in need of my feeble support. The latter has received general approbation, and will ever remain a monument of the extent and greatness of his abilities, and the goodness of his heart;—the principles of the book correspond with the sentiments of the man, and his life and writings have been uniformly exerted to make men better and happier.

Dr. PRIESTLEY should, in compassion to his friend Mr. Fox, have avoided reviving the fatal subject of the Coalition. The Doctor, in his pamphlet, conducts us to America, and various parts of the world, to prove the possibility of States existing without (in their
legislative

legislative capacity) any connection with the Church. It is not worthy our attention, as Englishmen, to know whether such a government can be well supported: Let us rather, as good subjects, revert to our own situation, and see whether England has subsisted, and has maintained at least a proportionate share of greatness, wealth, power, and happiness, under our present form of government.— I shall only investigate such of the Doctor's arguments as are applicable to England.

The happiness of the people is, in this writer's opinion, the criterion on which our decision of good or bad government should be founded; and the people are to be the judges of their own happiness or misery.

On these principles, I pronounce the people of England the best-governed nation under heaven, as they enjoy the largest proportion of happiness, and are conscious of their superiority. It will also be allowed,
that

that every individual, who promotes the happiness of his fellow-creatures, is a good member of society. Happiness cannot exist without content; he who therefore sows the seeds of discontent, lays at least the foundation for unhappiness.

In investigating those parts of Dr. PRIESTLEY's publication in answer to Mr. BURKE, which relate to this country, I think, on his own principles, it will appear the production of a bad heart, or defective understanding; and mark the writer a dangerous member of this our English community.—It is my intention to make every position I advance clear to common capacities, and to infuse content and happiness into the minds of my fellow-citizens, by demonstrating the blessings we now enjoy.



*Remarks on Dr. Priestley's IVth Letter, on the
Revolution of England in 1688.*

IN this letter the Doctor shews that the great actors at the revolution changed the natural succession of the Kings of this realm. He likewise infers, that the people have a right to dethrone Kings for mal-administration of government. We will not scrutinize into this right, or define whether the people exerted a legal right, or usurped an illegal authority; but we will consider the facts.

Here, as the Doctor observes, was a choice made both of a particular king *pro tempore*, and also of a new line of succession for future kings; and the country would not bear any thing more than a deviation from the line of succession to the crown, leaving the popish, and adopting the protestant line. This revolution, then, was undertaken partly in the cause of religion :—the people at this juncture
exerted

exerted (what the Doctor esteems) their legitimate authority, and with the power in their hands, they banished popery, and established the protestant religion; they then settled our beautiful and mixed form of government, and we at this moment enjoy the benefits resulting from their exertions.

Thus, on the Doctor's principles, our establishment of Church and State sprung from their proper source,—the voice of the people; who having chosen a form of government, and a religion, enacted laws for the security of both; and experience has confirmed the wisdom of their conduct. As the Doctor observes, they dreaded not kingly government, and therefore this country was not, and is not a republic;—on his own principles, this appears the best, the only reason, why it should not be a Republic. The people of England settled by mutual consent a form of government, and Dr. PRIESTLEY is one of those factious leaders who labours incessantly

cessantly to overthrow the fabric they have erected, and continue to approve; thus wishing them to despise the work of their own hands.

Equal liberty, and the rights of men, I mean not to treat of; though, in my poor opinion, they exist not in America, or Holland, or in any government under heaven, but in the theoretic brain of the Doctor.—Englishmen claimed and obtained the rights of citizens; they determined what those rights should be; and, as the Doctor observes, if more had been necessary, they would certainly have done more.—Notwithstanding the success of the event, Mr. BURKE's position is true, that a revolution is the last resource of the thinking and the good; and those who urge such a measure, without sufficient provocation, (of which the people are the best judges) are dangerous incendiaries. Englishmen are ever ready to assert and support their rights; they did so
at

at the revolution—their decisions were guided by wisdom, and they enjoy a full share of national and individual prosperity. Long may they continue great and happy; and thus let the people rejoice!

*Remarks on several Passages in Dr. Priestley's
6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Letters.*

Page 53d, the Doctor gives it as his opinion, that “Religion requires no civil establishment, and its beneficial operation is injured by such establishment.” A very natural opinion for an aspiring disappointed sectary. Under this unnatural union of Church and State, formed and approved of by the people of England, they have lived too happily to wish for a dissolution.

We are then asked, page 55, “what right
“any man has to complain of the Doctor, if
“he

“ he worships God in his own way, or if he
 “ does not chuse to worship him at all ?”

The great increafe of conventicles at Birmingham proves our religious tolerance ; and the Doctor’s licentious and rebellious pen, moving unpunished, demonstrates no small share of civil liberty.

The Doctor informs us, “ Government
 “ in many things has taken too much upon
 “ it, and brought itself into great and need-
 “ less embarrassments ; in many things, be-
 “ sides the article of religion, men have
 “ busied themselves in legislating too much,
 “ when it would have been better if indivi-
 “ duals had been left to think and act for
 “ themselves.”

It is incumbent on men (viz. government) to legislate ;—such conceited individuals as Dr. PRIESTLEY may justly be accused of legislating too much. Individuals are left to think and act for themselves ; and the only
 cause

cause of the Doctor's vehemence is, that the collective body of individuals will not permit him to think and act for them.

Page 77. " As to subscription to your
 " Articles, &c. if I be such a person as you
 " have described, why might not I declare
 " my unfeigned assent and consent to them,
 " as well as others?" Because it is inconsistent with your interest; you have chosen another road to gratify your ambition; and, as you can never procure emoluments under our present peaceable establishment, you labour incessantly to subvert order, and introduce confusion, that you and your sect may rise triumphant.

You " believe there are very few Dissenters
 " who, if the present establishment was overturned, would wish to substitute any other
 " in its place." We believe, we are convinced of the contrary;—almost every Dissenter enlisted under your factious banner, looks forward

forward to substitute YOUR religion for the established religion of the country ; and if we are to judge of the future by the past, it would be enforced with cruel intolerance.

Your very existence depends on your keeping alive the flame of opposition you have so industriously kindled ; and if your subscribing the Articles (an action now so repugnant to your feelings) would involve the Church and its adherents in a general conflagration, you would not long halt between two opinions ;—you would subscribe with your right hand, that you might apply the match with your left.

Page 88. “ Do not the Clergy exact the
 “ payment of small tithes, and often with
 “ the utmost rigour from their poorest pa-
 “ rishioners ? Do not we sometimes hear of
 “ their being turned out of their little tene-
 “ ments by a distress levied by their spiritual
 “ instructors ? And are not the poor Irish,
 “ some of the most destitute and miserable of
 “ mankind,

“ mankind, driven into almost annual rebellion, by oppression from the exaction of tithes ?”——The Doctor is here evidently obliged to cross the water, to complete his imputation of exaction on the Clergy ;—as my intention is to confine my remarks to England, I shall not attend him to our sister country ; but am happy in knowing, from experience and observation, that the Clergy of England, (to use Mr. BURKE’s words) so far from screwing up right into wrong, do not, on the aggregate, receive two-thirds of the value of their tithes.

Page 89 and 90. In these pages there is an attempt to cast a reflection on the established Church for want of charity and attention to their poor. Our private and public donations were, I should have supposed, too large and conspicuous for the pen of slander, even dipped in the Doctor’s poison, to have braved such an insinuation. Poor-rates, which the Doctor condemns, are a part of
our

our mixed establishment; and our Sunday and numberless other Charity Schools, do not demonstrate that inattention to “christianizing and civilizing our poor.”

Page 91. We are asked, “whether the attention of the Clergy to the great, is not extremely servile and debasing?” Who are most likely to be servile in their deportment; those possessed of good incomes for their lives, or those who cannot subsist without alms and contributions? The Dissenting teachers are certainly as anxious to live, as the Clergy are to aspire to new dignities.

Page 95. “If the governors of any country, in which religion is established, have no motives to stand in awe of the ministers of religion, which they evidently have not, (as they always see the ministers of religion standing in awe of them, and courting them) it is of no use to them that it is established at all.” Let us alter

the form of this sentence, and apply it to the Dissenters.—If any congregation or any sect have no motives to stand in awe of their teacher, (which they evidently have not who can dismiss him at pleasure) it is of no use to them that such a teacher is appointed at all.

I shall subjoin a few reasons, which seem to me of sufficient force to compact all classes of men in this kingdom against the Doctor's principles. Men dignified by birth or fortune should oppose them, because they tend avowedly to level all distinctions; and the Doctor and his adherents wish to divide their patrimony. The Clergy, on a principle of self-defence, and for the honour of their religion. The middling rank of people, (who are probably the most virtuous, and best-informed) should oppose tenets which would deprive them of that ease and happiness which they now securely enjoy. The poor should unite with one voice against doctrines

doctrines which are intended to abolish those rates, and that legal provision, which ensure them a subsistence.

*Remarks on Dr. PRIESTLEY's 10th Letter,
on an Elective Clergy.*

In this letter, by a master-piece of sophistry, we see appointments to civil offices, or domestic servants, compared and blended with an election of ministers; and are assured, that as a master is able to choose the best servant, so a congregation will elect the best minister: The reverse of this will appear to be the fact; and nothing can more essentially differ than civil and religious appointments.

A master chooses a servant whose conduct he is to direct; but in appointing to the pastoral office, the congregation nominate their director.—Would you allow a boy to choose his own tutor, or a servant his own master?

yet a dependent elected minister must be as useless as an independent self-elected servant; and such a congregation as ill instructed as the boy who should appoint his own tutor: as the boy, or the servant, would fix on a tutor or master, who would give them least trouble or correction, so it is natural for your congregations to appoint seers who see not, and prophets who prophesy not unto them right things, but speak unto them smooth things, and prophesy deceits; this is the wish of the heart, and the doctrine from such pastors must be more flattering than true. A person nominated to any civil office, and removeable at the will of him who nominates, must administer to the pleasure, the gratification, or interest of his patron; but a clergyman, performing his duty conscientiously, opposes present pleasure, gratification, and interest: should a poor dissenting minister reprove, censure, and condemn, a few of his richer disciples, their subscriptions would cease, they would assume a judgment of their own, and

judgment

dismiss the offensive disclaimer. In short, nothing but a cringing, fawning pliability, could secure him in his situation; and the most esteemed teacher, like the most valued domestic servant, is he who is best versed, not in the science of advising or censuring, but in the art of pleasing.

To flatter and not to condemn the vices of mankind, is the way to secure their approbation: this accounts most rationally for “the
 “esteem you assure us your ministers have ac-
 “quired with their flocks:”—As Mr. BURKE nobly observes, our constitution has therefore taken care that those who are to instruct presumptuous ignorance, those who are to be censors over insolent vice, should neither incur their contempt, or live on their alms, that the rich and poor may have the true medicine of their souls,

*Remarks on Dr. Priestley's 13th Letter on the
Test Laws.*

As the Gates of Hell will never prevail against the Church of Christ, which is built upon a rock, it is surprising the Doctor and his disciples should be in continual alarm, lest their religion should be suppressed, and their Church annihilated. He censures the established Church for their apprehensions, but surely the cry is equally loud from the pulpit declaimers of his sect. After this introduction, we are informed by the Doctor, “ that
“ had the war, which some suppose the mi-
“ nister did not wisely to provoke, taken
“ place, and increased our debt another hun-
“ dred millions, the national distress would
“ have ruined the national Church, and the
“ hallowed treasure might have been applied
“ to some unhallowed use.”

Is this the language of a good citizen?
Will this information render us more respect-
able

able in foreign countries, or in any degree add to our happiness? Would it not have been more candid, as it is at least doubtful whether Mr. PITT's rashness occasioned the commotion, to have given us a conclusion, which admits of no doubt, that the activity and exertions of our great minister and his friends averted this (in Dr. PRIESTLEY's opinion) impending ruin.

We are then reminded, “that by an increase of the publick debts, we shall find ourselves in the very same difficulties in which the French are involved at present.” This is at least an acknowledgment that we are to expect anarchy and confusion, before we can arrive at the Doctor's perfect form of government.—But, Englishmen, let not the idea of your present shamefully unequal representation (as the Doctor terms it) precipitate you to this ruin. Let the reformation the Dr. so ardently wishes, be absolutely necessary, before the state receives a convulsive shock, of which none can predict the consequence.

The Doctor then proceeds to make an illiberal and unjust attack upon the Church and its advocates; he, as boldly as falsely, asserts, our fundamental doctrines are disbelieved by men of sense and enquiry: The Doctor here supposes himself and his friend PRICE an host; for without this, there would appear an hundred men of sense and enquiry, fixed from unbiaſſed principle in all the articles of our religion, for one of that description who diſſents. When the Doctor talks of destroying the fatal connection between Church and State by his calmest representations, we almost wish to know what would, in his opinion, amount to violent remonstrances.

We readily believe this writer, when he says, that were the Dissenters admitted to an equal participation of civil rights, they would think less of religious ones: We have long seen that the emoluments of office have been their spring of action; and therefore we think the obnoxious Test Laws necessary, and they will

will also, on a candid investigation, appear equitable.

Almost all old opinions are exploded, whether true or false, good or bad, by the Doctor's theory; and the necessity of any religion seems to be doubted by this modern politician. Yet it would not, I think, be difficult to prove the necessity of religion, not only to the well-being, but to the very existence of the State. To the people of England this seems an unnecessary disquisition. They have made choice of the Protestant religion in its present form, as a national religion; they thought proper also to blend it with government; and Church and State, thus happily connected, have mutually aided and supported each other.

A Community having exerted this right of decision, and formed a code of laws for the regulation of their civil and religious polity, must also have a power of preserving
those

those privileges, of keeping them entire, as much as possible free from divisions ; for the more compact, the more firm they must necessarily be.

Now can there be a system so rational, or so adequate to this purpose, as confining the execution of their laws to the hands of its own citizens ; to such as, considered both in their religious and civil capacities, are advocates for the establishment ? Men, to belong fully and in every respect to one community, must adopt a similarity of religion, as well as form of government. He who dissents from the constitution on a spiritual, or civil motive, is a member in part ; he who differs in both, is out of the compact, and cannot be esteemed a member of such community.

If any man chooses to join a religious sect, different from that established by the society of which, in civil matters, he is a member,
that

that society has an equal right of imposing constitutional disabilities, to answer (what they think) the purpose of self-preservation. This seems sound judgment and discretion. The people of England made, approved, and continue to approve, these laws; and Dr. PRIESTLEY, by opposing them, rebels against the only authority he allows to be legitimate.

The Doctor declares himself an advocate for a multiplication of sects; in this he gives us the language of his heart; he accuses the Church of forgetting the old adage, *divide et impera*, and he is desirous of rising on those principles.

We are told our oppressions, and excluding the Dissenters from places of trust and power, (I suppose he means profit also) has given them one common interest; and an unexpected bond of union is formed, by compacting sects of every denomination, however heterogeneous their principles, into one
body;

body ; and the Doctor speaks of himself and them, as enlisted in one common cause, usurping the little pronoun WE, to denote himself the leader, and every Dissenter in the kingdom his abettor, to undermine our Church and State.

But permit me to relate to the Doctor, and to my reader, the sentiments of the Quakers, by no means an inconsiderable sect, either as to number or respectability: I received them from some leading men among them, and they assured me, their's was the language of the Brotherhood.

“ Friend,” (said one of them) “ sobriety,
 “ honesty, and industry, are the character-
 “ istics of our religion ; and an uniform prac-
 “ tice of these virtues secures us (under the
 “ English government in its present form)
 “ the enjoyment of peace and plenty. Were
 “ places of profit thrown open to us, the
 “ most idle and vicious part of our commu-
 “ nity

“ nity would scramble for, obtain, and fill
 “ those offices, to the discredit, if not the
 “ ruin of our sect. We can maintain our
 “ families, and acquire property ; your laws
 “ secure us the enjoyment of domestic tran-
 “ quility ; our religion is tolerated, and our
 “ mode of worship uninterrupted ; we are
 “ conscious of the blessings we enjoy, and
 “ will endeavour to support those laws which
 “ secure to us such invaluable privileges.

This is the language of the plain un-
 phistical Quakers ; this is the language of
 many, the most respectable of the Protestant
 Dissenters, and of the disinterested and unaf-
 piring of every sect in the kingdom.—How
 different from the factious doctrines of a
 PRICE or a PRIESTLEY !



*Concluding Chapter, recommending Content, and
the enjoyment of their present Happiness, to the
People of England.*

THE licentiousness of the times encourages each self-conceited individual to attempt innovations in the form or substance of our present establishment. Novelty delights;—and it is esteemed a greater honor for a man to think and act for himself, however inconsistent his thoughts, or destructive his tenets, than to be directed by the precept or example of characters the most rational and dignified. Not to be wiser than our ancestors, is a reflection on our enlightened understandings; our present system of worship and government is esteemed full of absurdities, and each reformer pretends to improve it. The senator, the philosopher, the mechanic, and the menial servant, introduce new, and, as they are termed, more perfect models. He whose fertile invention leads him farthest from the
safe

safe though beaten track, has the greatest share of applause.

We are assured, by one set of state physicians, that the Crown incroaches fast on the other branches of the legislative body; another declares the Nobles have too great an influence; and a third, that our tumultuous meetings portend an approaching democracy.

The popular frenzy of the times, leads to innovation; beware, lest these wise in their own conceits, by unskilfully eradicating the tares, root up the wheat also; remember, a frequent alteration of forms may destroy the substance.

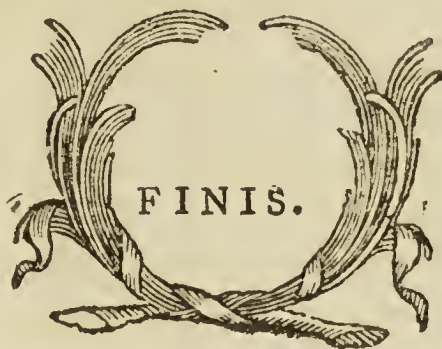
These speculative theories, however received, and violently inculcated, are at present embraced by the few; and as I wish to prevent the increase of such dangerous sectaries, I request the sober part of the people of England, to reflect well on our privileges and enjoyments,

enjoyments, before they join in introducing anarchy and confusion. With all our real or ideal defects and disorders, contemplate the situation of this envied, happy isle. When were you more respected by foreign powers? When had you a more favourable opportunity for internal happiness? Your trade, your manufactures, your commerce, your agricultural improvements, seem to ensure success to honest industry.

Let not the chimeras or ambition of a few individuals, interrupt the enjoyment of that happy tranquility which now presents itself. Under the mild dispensation of the Gospel, sanctioned and supported by the British laws, in their present form, we have risen to a state of unexampled glory; and to continue in the same envied situation, nothing seems necessary, but for each individual to discharge conscientiously his respective duty to his God and his King; for in these are comprehended all those qualities which render us
good

good Christians, and they must ever prove the most useful and valuable members of society.

Be assured, we are not in want of new laws or a new religion; nothing is necessary to continue us the most happy and the most prosperous people under heaven, but a strict conformity to our present civil and religious establishment.



most Christian, and they will ever have
the most skill and valuable members of
the Church.

Be assured, we are not in want of new laws
or a new religion, nothing is necessary to
convert us to the path of duty and the most
prosperous people of the continent, but a strict
conformity to our sacred civil and religious
obligations.

